

PRESS RELEASE

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Canada (Award Canada)
204-78 George Street, Ottawa ON K1N 5W1
437-747-0449



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Award Canada Launches National Awareness Week Celebrating Growth and Innovation in Youth Development

[Toronto, Ontario] — The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Canada (Award Canada) is proud to announce this year's *Award Awareness Week* (October 20–24, 2025), a national celebration recognizing the achievements of young people, the mentors who guide them, and the evolving role of experiential learning in Canadian education.

At the heart of this year's celebration is the **Award Canada Way**, a refreshed philosophy that modernizes the Award while staying true to its roots. It recognizes that real growth happens when learning is personal, challenging, and supported by mentorship. Rather than simply completing activities, participants engage in experiences that matter from community service and skill-building to physical challenges and adventure.

“We’re seeing incredible momentum as school boards, colleges, trades programs, and communities embrace the Award Canada Way,” said Mark Little, Chief Executive Officer of Award Canada. “By working with educators to integrate the Award directly into curricular and communities, we’re ensuring that experiential learning isn’t an add-on, but a complement to classroom learning as part of our greater strategic goal to enable a transformation of education in Canada.”

A Year of Growth and Impact

Award Canada's **Co-curricular Approach** is now active in high schools, post-secondary institutions, and skilled trades programs across the country. In 2024 alone, youth contributed over **41,000 hours** to community service, demonstrating the Award's lasting impact on civic engagement and leadership.

This momentum is the result of a multi-year strategy called **Revival 2.0**, launched three years ago to expand access to the Award through schools, colleges, and skilled trades programs. That strategy is now delivering real impact reflected in new partnerships with **Peel District School Board, Surrey Schools, Fanshawe College**, and the **Women in Red Seal Skilled Trades program at Sheridan College**, each a milestone in expanding access and equity through experiential learning.

These partnerships validate the Award's “seed and scale” model and position it for exponential growth. With over **11,000 active participants** and **350+ Award Leaders**, Award Canada is scaling toward its bold vision: **engaging 30,000 young people by 2030** and laying the foundation for a future where **500,000 youth** across Canada can benefit from the Award.

Highlights of Award Awareness Week:

Each day features a **virtual session at 12 PM ET**, open to the public and designed to inspire, educate, and connect:

- **Monday – Make it Known:** Kickoff with Paralympian Michelle Stilwell and Award alum Peter Lawless. Launch of Gold Award Achiever recognition page.

- **Tuesday – Teamwork:** Peer-learning with education consultant, Laura Briscoe on curriculum-linked delivery; Francophone session with Special Projects Director, Vicky Buteau on co-curricular integration in French-language schools.
- **Wednesday – Showcase:** Alumni panel hosted by the Award Canada Alumni Network (ACAN) on global career pathways.
- **Thursday – Thank You:** Launch of the Award Mentor Recognition page; session with Mentor Canada on youth development tools.
- **Friday – Do a Deed:** Volunteer Canada shares how youth can turn passions into action through service.

Recognition & Celebration

While ceremonial elements remain part of the week, they serve to amplify the real story: youth impact. Flag-raising ceremonies and proclamations from provincial leaders including British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland & Labrador underscore the Award’s national significance.

Why the Award Matters Now and for the Future

In a world of rapid change and evolving workforce demands, meaningful experiential learning has never been more important. The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award provides a proven pathway for young people to build the skills, confidence, and adaptability that communities and employers value most.

By embedding the Award into schools and expanding access through partnerships, Award Canada is ensuring every young person, regardless of background can grow through experiences that build resilience, employability, and a sense of purpose. With its focus on real-world challenges, mentorship, and self-directed learning, the Award prepares youth not only for academic success, but for life.

“In 27 years of teaching across various roles, the Award Canada model integrated with school plans is the best experiential framework I’ve seen to support youth.” said Vicki Houston, Director of Education at Greater Essex County District School Board “It enables young people to feel they belong and can achieve their outcomes.... this is such an incredible opportunity for students, every single student and family needs to know about it.”

Join the Celebration

Award Canada invites media, educators, and communities to join the celebrations, share stories using **#AwardCanada** and **#AwardCanadaWay**, and explore how experiential learning is transforming education in Canada.

For more information on Award Awareness Week or to schedule an interview with Award representatives, please visit www.dukeofed.org/award-awareness-week or contact Aida Abader, Director, Marketing & Communications.

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About Award Canada:

The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award – Canada (Award Canada) is the national operator of The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award, a global framework that supports youth development leading to international accreditation. With guidance from adult mentors, each young person is

*encouraged to challenge themselves, identify and leverage their interests, abilities, and ambitions, then set personal goals in four areas: **skill, physical and mental health, community involvement, and teamwork**. The Award provides fun and motivation by empowering student voice and engagement, enabling them to undertake experiences that build character, personal belief, and lifelong skills.*

We exist to equip every young person in Canada, regardless of background or life circumstance, with the necessary skills and experience to succeed in life. Whoever they are, wherever they come from, and whatever they define as success, the Award helps young people develop essential skills that only come through experience. We have been supporting youth in Canada for over 60 years, transforming the lives of over 500,000 young people from all backgrounds, cultures, and abilities. Globally, the Award operates in over 130 countries, engaging 1.3 million participants.

Media Contact:

Aida Abader
Director, Marketing & Communications
Award Canada
media@dukeofed.org
www.dukeofed.org